

# The Jewish View - Aging



The Torah considers old age a virtue and a blessing. Throughout the Torah, "old" is synonymous with "wise"; the Torah commands us to respect all elderly, regardless of their scholarship and piety, because the many trials and experiences that each additional year of life brings yield a wisdom which the most accomplished young prodigy cannot equal. It describes Abraham as one who "grew old and came along in days" (Genesis 24:1)

But there is more to it than that. There is more to the difference between the Torah's perspective on old age and that of the modern world than the classic dichotomy between body and soul, more than the question of material versus spiritual priority.

Torah describes old age as a reward for virtuous living, such as faithful attendance at the house of study or for a life marked by righteousness and Torah. Old age is valued as reward and blessing, and elders are to be treated with deference and respect. In addition to the obligation to honor our parents, the Holiness Code outlines our responsibilities to older adults in general, "You shall rise before the aged (gray-haired) and show deference (hiddur) in the presence of the old (zaken).

## **Positive Phases of Aging**

There are three phases of positive Aging;

- 1) Age 65 – 75 Learning Period - how to get old. It will take 10 years to learn and prepare how to get old.

- 2) Age 76 – 85 Expert Period – how to become an expert for aging. This will take 10 years to become an expert for aging. This period is the most joyful and happiest time in one's whole life time physically, mentally, and spiritually.
- 3) Age 86 Plus – Master Period – All 86 plus age – how to become a master in life.